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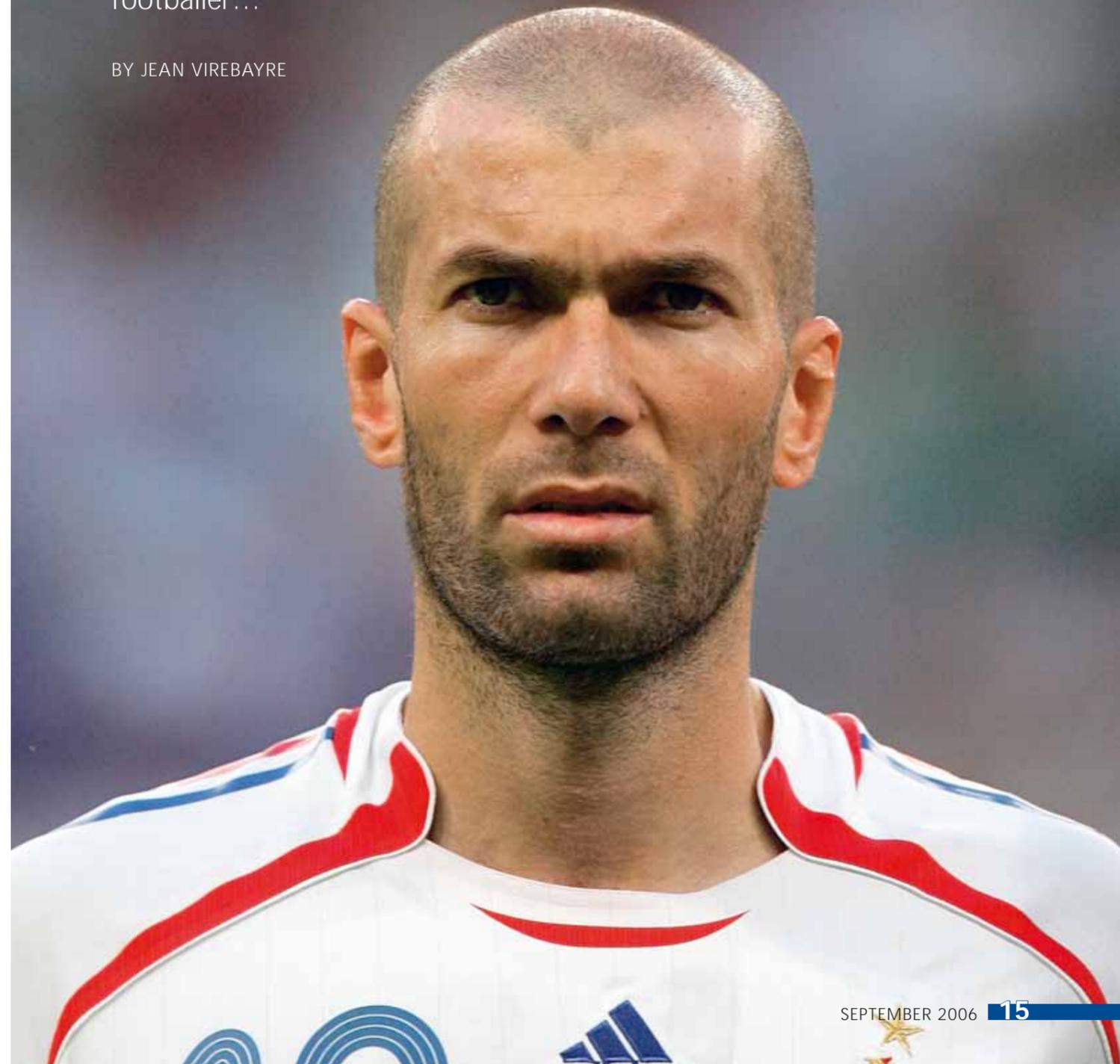


Zinedine Zidane

A diamond in the rough

At times superhuman, at other times an ordinary human being defending basic values, Zinedine Zidane showed during the World Cup that perfection is not of this world. Time to reflect on the odyssey of an exceptional footballer...

BY JEAN VIREBAYRE



Time does not wither talent, as Frenchman Zinedine Zidane admirably demonstrated during the 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™ where he was voted the tournament's best player. It was only to be expected that such a peerless player, who is also difficult to typecast, should exalt the World Cup final into a sumptuous testimonial.

As Pele pointed out after the 1-0 victory over the Brazilian maestros, whose passage to glory Zidane has blocked in two of the last three World Cups, he can play like a genius.

But, the rough diamond sometimes shows up imperfections, such as when he head-butted the chest of Italian Marco Materazzi while millions of viewers looked on. It was an inexcusable gesture that shocked the whole world, even if the moment of madness had been provoked by verbal abuse.

Zidane has now retired but he was without doubt the last great artist capable of bringing a crowd to

its feet in awe of his perfect control, his velvet touch of the ball, combined with a thrilling sense of anticipation.

Modest as always, he himself refused to consider himself as the world's best player. "There are so many qualities missing – especially consistency. Every season, I have always had periods of patchy form." His manner of speaking has always been marked by unpretentiousness, honesty and his love for his family, even after winning

the 1998 World Cup title and EURO 2000. "That changed nothing," he claims. "I have always stayed the same. You should not change; you should stay the person you really are and always have been."

Born of an Algerian Kabylie father in the northern suburbs of Marseilles – a city that lives for football – nothing seemed to predict the evolution of shy "Yazid". He had to work very hard to overcome the effects of a genetic disorder known as thalassemia, which is a benign but extremely tiring ailment.

NATURAL TALENT

Although blessed with exceptional, natural gifts, Zidane practised long and hard to develop his diverse feints and tricks such as his trademark "magic roulette" turn, cultivated in the Castellane suburb of Marseilles. "I reached this level by sheer dint of hard work, toiling away at scores of tricks and experiments. I used to play with the ball from dawn till dusk and just kept practising. If I wasn't playing matches, it was trying out one on one or two against two with a tennis ball. Then I used to try aiming at certain targets. That's the only way to learn. And if I missed the target, I kept trying until I scored", he muses.

During the course of his life and his career as a footballer, Zidane had the opportunity of meeting several people who understood the deeply sensitive artist and rallied round him. Jean Varraud, his spiritual father who died during the 2006 World Cup, was the guiding light who initially recruited him to Cannes in 1989, where Zidane enjoyed his first taste of professional football. He then earned his spurs with Bordeaux, a modest club very much suited to his temperament.

Later on, Aime Jacquet offered a spot in the national team, building his formation



Zidane's decisive goals



Zidane in his youth: with Cannes in 1991 (top) and playing for France in 1994.



Crucial and spectacular goals: Zidane scores with a header in the 1998 World Cup final and a stunning strike in the 2002 UEFA Champions League final.

His first goal:

Cannes, 8 February 1991. Cannes 2 Nantes 1. Zinedine Zidane scores the first goal of his professional career in the 56th minute of play. "The chairman of Cannes, Alain Pedretti, had promised me a car the first day I scored a goal," he recalls. "He kept his word and I got my first car – a red Clio – during a party for all of the Cannes players."

International appearances:

Bordeaux, 17 August 1994. France 2 Czech Republic 2. Zidane marks his first international appearance in a pre-season friendly in Bordeaux. When Aime Jacquet sends him on in the 63rd minute, France are trailing 2-0. In the last five minutes, Zidane scores first with a lob, then equalises with a searing header across goal – his first gifts to *Les Bleus*.

At top level:

Paris, 12 July 1998. FIFA World Cup™ final. France 3 Brazil 0. Although up to that point, his World Cup campaign had not been an all-out success, he proved with flying colours that the great matches belong to great men. In the final, he lit up the Stade de France with his brilliance, scoring two fabulous headers from two corners in the first half. His name was subsequently splashed all over the Arc de Triomphe.

European triumphs:

Rotterdam, 2 July 2000. EURO 2000 final. France 2 Italy 1 (golden goal). France are in exquisite form in the European Championship. Playing even better than in 1998, they pull off their second European triumph since 1984 after a thrilling final against Italy. Despite not scoring, Zidane, both feared and respected by the Italians who regularly rubbed shoulders with him in Italian football, plays a key role in the game.

The masterpiece:

Glasgow, 12 May 2002. Champions League final. Real Madrid 2 Bayer Leverkusen 1. Zidane finally finds the net in his third Champions League final. He slots home the decisive goal with a sublime shot, one that has gone down in football history. Receiving a cross from Roberto Carlos, he hits a breathtaking volley with his left foot into the top corner of the German keeper's net. It is probably the most perfect shot of his career.

Comeback:

Montpellier, 17 August 2005. France 3 Cote d'Ivoire 0. With his country at risk of not qualifying for the 2006 World Cup, Zidane returns to the national team after having announced his retirement from the international scene twelve months earlier. Finding himself unmarked at the far post, Zidane scores the second of France's three goals from a corner taken by Wiltord. Zidane revives France's dream.

The last goal:

Berlin, 9 July 2006. 2006 FIFA World Cup™ final. Italy 1 France 1 (5-3 on penalties). Having struck the third goal against Spain in the round of sixteen and the decisive penalty against Portugal (1-0) in the semi-final, Zinedine Zidane scores the last goal of his career in the World Cup final against Italy with yet another penalty, this time a picture-book chipped effort against Gianluigi Buffon – an exploit never before ventured in a World Cup final.

around Zidane. In EURO 1996, Zidane played the part of playmaker while Eric Cantona stayed at home.

Juventus, Michel Platini's former team, then discovered the top-class player who finally unfurled his mesmerising range of talent in the 1998 World Cup final, leading his team to victory with two priceless headers which were frequently flashed around the world.

France finally fell for Zidane's charm and he became the emblem of the city of Marseilles and a multicultural country. Dubbed "Zizou" by the media, ►

Zidane's records

Zinedine Zidane's goal in the 2006 World Cup final against Italy wrote a new chapter in the history of world-class football.

- Having found the net twice in the 1998 World Cup final against Brazil, Zidane in fact became only the fourth player in history to score in two World Cup finals. He has thus joined the ranks of Brazilians Pele (1958 and 1970) and Vava (1958 and 1962) as well as German defender Paul Breitner (1974 and 1982).

- With a tally of three goals in two finals, he has become top goalscorer in a World Cup final alongside Pele and Vava from Brazil and Sir Geoff Hurst from England, the latter having netted a hat trick in 1966.

- By netting 31 goals for France, he has overtaken two legendary French players (Just Fontaine and Jean-Pierre Papin), ranking as fourth highest goalscorer for France behind Michel Platini (41 goals), Thierry Henry (36) and David Trezeguet (32).

Zidane's last red card was the 14th in his career.



Genius on the ball, successful, but media-shy. Zidane makes a rare public appearance at the French Open in June 2005 with champion Rafael Nadal (right).



Zidane captaining France, training with Real Madrid, serving as the inspiration for a fan's affection, and playing against friend and Real Madrid team-mate Ronaldo.



► Zidane was transformed overnight into a political symbol, the ideal Frenchman and boy next door in public opinion polls, and a hero for advertisers who touted his image as a protective family man.

This image could easily have been tarnished in 2001 when he joined Real Madrid for a record fee of 75 million euros. But, in fact, money has never been the driving force in Zidane's life. He sees no anomaly between the fabulous salaries paid to professional footballers and his commitment to fighting poverty as a UN ambassador alongside Ronaldo. "There's no connection between the two. If I'm paid a lot of money for playing football, it's because I probably deserve it. It's not the type of environment to deal out presents. And I am very proud of what I have achieved so far despite many setbacks. It serves as a motivation to continue the fight against poverty. Many other players, including my French team-mates, are doing the same as I am but perhaps in a different way."

He also knows that his name alone carries extraordinary weight and he does not want to do anything untoward that could tarnish that image. "One thing is certain – everyone has the ability to do whatever they want. Of course, they use me as a figurehead. But if I am used for a good purpose, that's good enough for me."

After World Cup victory in 1998, France arrived at the Korea/Japan tournament as top favourites in 2002, with Zidane at the pinnacle of his career at Real Madrid.

But their playmaker arrived in Asia belatedly after attending the birth of his son back home and injured his left thigh in the team's final training session, forcing him to miss the start of the tournament. France were orphaned overnight and their campaign turned into a pitiful shambles. Two years later, after the team's disappointing showing in EURO 2004, Zinedine Zidane closed another chapter in his career and announced his retirement from international football.

COMEBACK

However, having witnessed the French team's difficulty in qualifying for the 2006 World Cup, he reversed his decision in summer 2005 and promptly returned to the steering wheel. The gamble paid off. Zidane's very presence on the field transformed France, who rediscovered their elan and snatched qualification in their very last match.

Then the second bolt from the blue came when, a few weeks before the start of the tournament, Zidane decided to make this year's World Cup his swansong. Another gamble, which almost misfired. Regardless of Italy's final victory, the everlasting image of this World Cup will be of the impressive 1-0 victory over Brazil in which Zidane produced the most sumptuous performance of his long career.

If there is such a thing as perfection, it was there in that stadium that Zidane attained it. His precision passing, sudden feints and endless inspiration enabled France to bypass the Brazilians and hoist themselves into the semi-finals. Previously, he had clinched victory over Spain in the round of sixteen by scoring the third goal for 3-1 and he later went on to score a penalty during a superb performance in France's 1-0 semi-final victory over Portugal.

In the final against Italy, Zidane had opened the scoring by executing an audacious chipped penalty. And then, after a cross from Willy Sagnol in the 104th minute, he was within a hair's breadth of planting a thundering header into the net. But facing him was the world's best goalkeeper, Gianluigi Buffon, who pulled off a breathtaking save.

Zidane realised he had missed his best chance and the match was slipping away. Annoyed, exhausted and powerless to change the course of play, he resorted

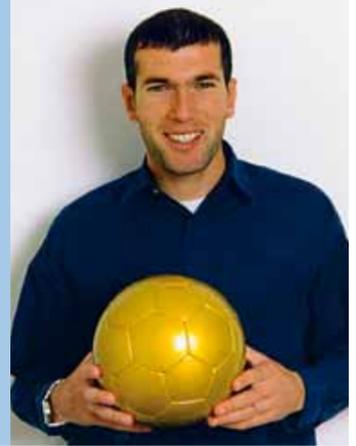
ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Born: 23 June 1972 in Marseilles (France)

Position: midfielder

Career: 1986-1992: Cannes. 1992-1996: Bordeaux. 1996-2001: Juventus (Italy). 2001-2006: Real Madrid (Spain).

Honours: 1998: World Cup winner. 2006: World Cup runner-up. 2000: European Championship winner. 2002: UEFA Champions League winner. 1996 and 2002: Intercontinental Cup winner. 1996 and 2002: European Super Cup winner. 1997 and 1998: UEFA Champions League runner-up. 1996: UEFA Cup runner-up. 2003: Spanish league champion. 1997 and 1998: Italian league champion. 2001 and 2003: Spanish super cup winner. 1997: Italian super cup winner. FIFA World Player of the Year in 1998, 2000 and 2003. Voted best player of the FIFA World Cup™ in 1998 and 2006. UEFA's most valuable player in European club football in 2002. 108 caps, 31 goals.



As at 11 July 2006

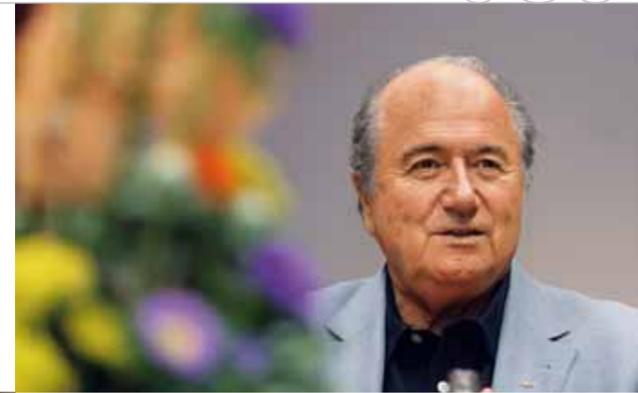
Highly decorated: Zidane holding the 2003 FIFA World Player Award (top) and with the 1998 Ballon d'Or.

PHOTOS: FOTO-NET (12), IMAGO (5)

His final goal celebration: Zidane reels away with satisfaction after slotting home a penalty in the 2006 World Cup final. 110th minute shock: the French playmaker sees red for a headbutt.



“ This is something that only **football** can achieve ”



FIFA magazine: If you had to give the FIFA World Cup™ in Germany a mark out of 10, what would it be?

Joseph S. Blatter: I would give the organisation and ambiance 9, the standard of football 8. I would have liked to have seen more attacking football in the knockout stages of the competition. It seemed to me that in the knockout rounds the priority for most of the teams was avoiding defeat. That meant that some of the top players who were expected to shine were not able to do so. They seemed to be impeded by the shackles that coaches placed upon them. Lots of coaches employed only one striker and that's not a lot. On the other hand, we saw Zinedine Zidane regain the form he showed during the World Cup in France eight years ago.

How many World Cups have you actively followed?

Blatter: I have been on FIFA duty at every tournament since 1978, but the first World Cup that I took an interest in was in Brazil in 1950. Then, when the event came to Switzerland in 1954, I saw it in person. I bought myself a ticket for the final. It cost six francs and ten centimes. I've still got it somewhere.

When you consider the rapid development of the game, do you sometimes get a little nostalgic about how things used to be?

Blatter: Football has grown both in terms of its position in society and as a result of progress in society. There was a time when the fans were separated from the pitch by fences. It was terrible and even led to the loss of lives. Today, spectators are sitting close to the action again. It is a change that has been pioneered and championed by the English football authorities. The standard of comfort in stadiums is now very high.

And outside the stadiums, supporters celebrate at fan festivals...

Blatter: Yes. That was an idea that came from one of our FIFA staff in Germany, Gregor Lentze. The fan festivals ensured that even if fans didn't have tickets

During this year's World Cup in Germany, FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter attended at least one match involving 31 of the 32 teams taking part. Speaking to *FIFA magazine*, he draws very positive conclusions about the tournament, even though he would like to have seen more adventurous play in the latter stages.

BY GEORG HEITZ



The President and the trophy: Joseph S. Blatter poses with world football's ultimate prize in Berlin. Right: Blatter with former US President Bill Clinton, Brazilian legend Pele and partner Ilona Boguska.



Blatter, the marathon man

► they could still be part of the World Cup. The images that we saw of the “fan miles” were wonderful. Football has brought about a welcome change of direction in this respect. An atmosphere of friendship has prevailed ever since the 1998 World Cup in France. This was evident in Korea and Japan, and again this year in Germany.

For you personally, is there a match that you consider the greatest of all time?

Blatter: Every match produces emotions and passion. Football can be a drama, but also a tragedy, particularly when a game has to be decided by penalties. When it comes to this decisive showdown, football is no longer a team sport, instead it is reduced to a duel between goalkeeper and penalty-taker.

How can that be changed?

Blatter: Well, we introduced the golden goal a few years ago, which meant that the match ended as soon as one team scored in extra time. The traditionalists then came along and said that the excitement of some of the most memorable games ever had not started until after the first goal had been scored in extra time, like France v. West Germany in the 1982 World Cup in Spain. Unfortunately, you don't see many goals in extra time these days. I don't

have a solution at the moment, but I can assure you that I fully sympathise with the players – goalkeepers and penalty-takers alike – when a game has to be decided by penalties.

Let's go back to the World Cup in Germany. The tournament had reverted to a European championship by the time it reached the semi-finals, hadn't it?

Blatter: No, I would definitely not say that. It was a World Cup where two European teams managed to overcome the two South American powerhouses in the last eight. The last time that there were no South Americans in the semi-finals was in 1982.

How important is it for a World Cup that the host nation stays in the tournament for as long as possible?

Blatter: It's important during the group matches and the first of the knockout rounds. A good showing by the home team in that part of the tournament helps to generate a buoyant atmosphere. It doesn't matter later in the tournament, because the fans just want to celebrate football in general.

The president of the local organising committee, Franz Beckenbauer, almost seemed to

be more in the thick of things than you were. Did that bother you at all?

Blatter: No. He was everywhere, he really revelled in his World Cup. He is a great personality and it was important that he attended the matches. I had different duties to perform. I managed to meet the delegations from every association – apart from Sweden – and hold discussions with officials.

How much did the turbulent events surrounding the Togo football association upset you?

Blatter: It was very sad that a team appearing in the World Cup for the first time produced so many negative headlines. In the end, we were forced to intervene in the bonus dispute between the association and the players. The association's officials have since sent a written apology to FIFA.

Diego Maradona was one of the most eye-catching personalities in the stands. What did you think about his behaviour?

Blatter: I met him and he gave his assurances once again that he would come to visit FIFA headquarters in Zurich some time soon and that he would work for our organisation... Maradona is Maradona, there's not much more than you can say.

Were there any particular gestures during the World Cup that especially pleased you?

Blatter: Players frequently helped each other back to their feet and there were some heart-warming scenes at the end of several matches, particularly France v. Brazil and England v. Portugal. It was only after Argentina played Germany that tempers frayed after the final whistle. On the whole though, the fair play principles that FIFA promotes were respected.

FIFA ran an anti-racism campaign with team captains reading out a declaration before the start of each of the four quarter-finals. Were you pleased with its impact?

Blatter: Yes, because football has a unifying influence. I'm delighted when I see a team that unites players of different races. Football has the ability to bring people together.

What lessons must FIFA take from the tournament in Germany when looking ahead to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa?

Blatter: We will have to adapt to the surroundings, but we definitely want to retain the fan festivals. It's very important that we bring people together in South Africa. They tried to do that with the rugby and cricket world cups, but failed. This is something that only football can achieve. ■

The 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™ was a very hectic one for FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter, with matches, media conferences and meetings with countless personalities to fit in. Here are a few of the highlights of his stay in Germany (not including official meetings):

| | | | |
|---------|--------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9 June | 18.00h | Munich | Germany v. Costa Rica |
| 10 June | 15.00h | Frankfurt | England v. Paraguay |
| 11 June | 15.00h | Leipzig | Serbia & Montenegro v. Netherlands |
| 12 June | 21.00h | Hanover | Italy v. Ghana |
| 13 June | 21.00h | Berlin | Brazil v. Croatia |
| 14 June | 21.00h | Dortmund | Germany v. Poland, meeting with family of Daniel Nivel |
| 15 June | 15.00h | Nuremberg | England v. Trinidad & Tobago |
| 16 June | 18.00h | Stuttgart | Netherlands v. Cote d'Ivoire, visit to Baden-Wuerttemberg state parliament, signing of golden book of Baden-Wuerttemberg, meeting with state first minister Oettinger. |
| 17 June | 15.00h | Kaiserslautern | Unveiling of monument at Fritz Walter museum with state first minister Kurt Beck |
| 17 June | 21.00h | Kaiserslautern | Italy v. USA |
| 18 June | 21.00h | Leipzig | France v. Korea Republic |
| 19 June | 18.00h | Hamburg | Saudi Arabia v. Ukraine |
| 20 June | 16.00h | Berlin | Ecuador v. Germany |
| 21 June | 16.00h | Leipzig | Iran v. Angola |
| 22 June | 21.00h | Dortmund | Japan v. Brazil, women's football event at adidas World of Football in Berlin |
| 23 June | 16.00h | Berlin | Ukraine v. Tunisia |
| 23 June | 21.00h | Cologne | Togo v. France |
| 24 June | 21.00h | Leipzig | Argentina v. Mexico |
| 25 June | 21.00h | Nuremberg | Portugal v. Netherlands |
| 26 June | 17.00h | Kaiserslautern | Italy v. Australia |
| 26 June | 21.00h | Cologne | Switzerland v. Ukraine |
| 27 June | 17.00h | Dortmund | Brazil v. Ghana |
| 28 June | | | Media conference concerning FIFA Anti-Discrimination Day |
| 30 June | 17.00h | Berlin | Germany v. Argentina |
| 1 July | 17.00h | Gelsenkirchen | Portugal v. England, Photo session with UK Minister of Sport Richard Caborn and English schoolchildren who received tickets from FIFA |
| 2 July | | Berlin | Streetfootball event |
| 4 July | 21.00h | Dortmund | Germany v. Italy |
| 5 July | 21.00h | Munich | France v. Portugal, Presentation of cheque to SOS Children's Villages, meeting with Spike Lee, visit to ISE Hospitality |
| 6 July | | Berlin | Photo session with First National Bank (FIFA World Cup Sponsor in 2010), welcome from German President Horst Kohler |
| 7 July | | Berlin | "Africa's calling" event, signing of contract with new sponsor, visit to German Chancellery to receive Federal Cross of Merit |
| 8 July | | Stuttgart | Germany v. Portugal, signing of contract with McDonald's |
| 9 July | | Berlin | Italy v France, media briefing and signing of FIFA/EU agreement, reception hosted by German President |



Blatter with Franz Beckenbauer, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in front of Berlin's Olympiastadion, and meeting children.

FOTOS: FOTO-NET

Danger from **the right**

The FIFA Technical Study Group (TSG) analysed all 64 World Cup matches in Germany and made a number of interesting observations, as summarised by *FIFA magazine*.

BY HOLGER OSIECK*



FORMATIONS

There were no obvious new trends in terms of formations during the tournament in Germany. Twenty-eight of the 32 participating teams played with a back four, and although Japan began Germany 2006 with a three-man back line, they switched to a line of four later in the tournament.

There was more variation in the teams' midfield line-ups. The classic 4-4-2 formation, with two central midfielders and two wingers, was used by a number of teams including Brazil, Germany, England and the USA, but the Brazilians and English both changed their system for their quarter-finals by fielding an additional defensive midfielder.

Other teams, such as Argentina and Ghana, operated with only one stopper in front of the defence. South American teams tended to use a "diamond formation" in midfield, but the Africans positioned a three-man line in front of their solitary defensive midfielder.

It was interesting to note that three of the four semi-finalists – Portugal, France and Italy – used identical formations, with a line of three in between two defensive midfielders and the lone striker up front.

Overall, there was a wide range of playing systems on show in Germany. Teams such as Portugal, Argentina and Mexico stayed true to their traditions by using a quick game based on short passes, but these teams were also capable of playing long balls to the wings to open up play before looking for their strikers who were good in the air. Other teams, including Sweden, relied on long balls and a more direct route to goal.

No matter which playing system was used, the success or failure of a team ultimately came down to the team's individual qualities.

Germany (pictured) and many other teams played with a four-man defence during the World Cup.



Compact defending: Italy's Gennaro Gattuso (left) and Fabio Cannavaro repel Australian striker Mark Viduka.

DEFENCE

Defending at this World Cup was based on a compact defence to keep the goal intact. Pressure was seldom applied far up the pitch, as teams tried to prevent opponents from counter-attacking if possession was lost. Generally, when opponents launched attacks, the first striker would close down the man in possession and the rest of the team would quickly form a defensive block. The defensive line would sit deep and once possession had been regained, the team would then try to launch attacks as quickly as possible. Central defensive

midfielders are now also having more and more influence in build-up play. Players such as Italy's Andrea Pirlo and Ghana's Michael Essien, for example, are not merely defensive players as they are also able to shape their team's attacking play thanks to their fine technique and visionary passes. These players do not only launch attacks, but they are also able to dictate the pace of the game. Depending on the situation, such players can either play long balls towards the strikers or simply help their team's controlled build-up play by passing the ball sideways. ▶



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IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING



► ATTACK

All teams tried to exploit the space down the wings, using their wingers' pace and dribbling skills to get behind the opposition defence and play crosses or passes to their strikers to finish off moves.

Teams that played with two central midfielders, like Germany with Torsten Frings and Michael Ballack for example, also encouraged their wingers (such as Bernd Schneider) to seek the ball in the centre of the pitch, thereby creating a link between midfield and attack. Juan Roman Riquelme played as an attacking central midfielder for Argentina and he was responsible for launching most of his team's attacks, with support and cover provided by Javier Mascherano.

If players swapped positions, they tended to do so on the wings with the left and right wingers changing sides. Portugal, with Cristiano Ronaldo and Luis Figo, were a prime example of this. By using this tactic, teams tried to create confusion and pose more problems for the opposing defence.

Interestingly, far more goals were created on the right-hand side than the left (15 from the right, 4 from the left).

SET PIECES

There was a new development in set pieces though, and this was particularly noticeable at free kicks near to the touchline with players such as David Beckham swinging the ball into the penalty area where only the slightest touch was needed to divert the ball into the goal. It did not matter whether this touch came from a team-mate or from an opposition defender, as was the case with England's winning goal against Paraguay.

Free kicks from central positions were far less successful and it is becoming increasingly difficult to score directly from a free kick. Teams study free-kick takers, and goalkeepers are well prepared to form their walls accordingly.

There was also an obvious lack of feints or dummies at indirect free kicks. Players did not normally run over the ball or play it through the legs of a team-mate to give another a better opening for a shot at goal. Most teams relied on their specialist free-kick taker's shooting technique, and the ball would be touched or passed to one side to allow a team-mate to shoot at goal. ►

Portugal captain Luis Figo regularly switched position with team-mate Cristiano Ronaldo.

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► GOALKEEPING

In general, the standard of goalkeeping was excellent. It was clear that goalkeepers have fully adapted to the changes brought about by the backpass rule, as many – Edwin van der Sar and Jens Lehmann to name but two – showed excellent ball control before playing accurate passes out of defence to launch their team's attacks.

The low number of goals at this World Cup was not only due to the compact defensive system used by virtually every team, but also because of the marked improvement in goalkeeping standards, which also featured excellent reactions and an impressive command of the penalty area.

Accurate goal kicks, which were usually taken by the goalkeepers themselves, and throws to team-mates were important elements of team build-up play. It was interesting to observe the different techniques for drop kicks, as goalkeepers from South America and Central America tended to kick the ball from waist level for a flatter trajectory and a faster, more accurate pass to their team-mates.

Finally, although some goalkeepers talked about the different trajectory of the new "adidas+Teamgeist™" ball, there is (as yet) no firm evidence to support this.

** Holger Osieck was the head of the 2006 FIFA World Cup™ Technical Study Group, which consisted of 14 members. Between 1987 and 1990, Osieck coached the West German national team, and he was at Franz Beckenbauer's side when West Germany won the 1990 FIFA World Cup™.*



Strong on his line, assured on the ball: Netherlands goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar.

PHOTOS: FOTO-NET (3), IMAGO



The Technical Study Group FIFA WC 2006

- 1st row (f.l.t.r.): Andy Roxburgh, Holger Osieck (FIFA, Head of TSG), Roger Milla, Jurg Nepfer (FIFA, TSG Coordinator).
- 2nd row: Jim Selby, Josef Venglos, Roberto T. Brantschen (FIFA, TSG Coordinator).
- 3rd row: Kim Chon Lim, Kalusha Bwalya, Teofilo Cubillas, Rodrigo Kenton.
- 4th row: Francisco Maturana, Ka-Ming Kwok, Roy Hodgson, Alvin Corneal.
- 5th row: Walter Gagg (FIFA, Director of Stadiums and Security), Gyorgy Mezey, Philipp Mahrer (FIFA, Production).